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# *The MCA Advisory*

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*The Newsletter of Medal Collectors of America*

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**Dues:** \$20.00/Year

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## **Coming Events**

October 17, 2006 - Indian Peace Medals I  
of John J. Ford, Jr.

Stack's auction schedule is published on  
their website [www.stacks.com](http://www.stacks.com) since last minute  
changes to the Ford schedule have been known to  
occur unexpectedly.

## **What's New On Our Website!**

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE EVERY MONTH

[www.medalcollectors.org](http://www.medalcollectors.org)



## From the Editor

On October 17<sup>th</sup>, Stacks' will be conducting Ford XVI, an absolutely spectacular offering of Indian peace medals. John Ford's collection is more complete than any other ever assembled, in both the colonial and the federal series. For any of us who collect Indian peace medals, there will be a long list of desiderata.

At the last Ford sale, we attempted to organize a post-auction dinner. However, the session lasted far too long for a dinner to be practical. This time around, we would like to organize a pre-auction lunch. How many of you would be interested in attending such an event at 1:00 p.m. at the Parker Meridian? Time is short so please e-mail me regarding your likely interest ([john.adams@canaccordadams.com](mailto:john.adams@canaccordadams.com)) and I will confirm.

This is indeed a special time for collectors of Indian Peace medals. Just as Tony Lopez' article in this issue describes the perils of acquiring peace medals on eBay, so will Stacks' catalog of Ford XVI set a feast of the real thing. In addition, in the October issue of COINage, our own David Alexander has an outstanding piece on the subject. He both previews the menu for the Ford sale and provides useful background information. We would quarrel with him on just one point: "Ford's research revealed that Spain made little use of medals in its Indian relations, preferring to distribute flags and batons." This statement is simply not true. Spain awarded hundred of medals to tribes along the Mississippi and in the Southeast. The survival rate has been very low, as is true also of the French medals, both of which were swapped by the Indians for British or American medals, as the case might have been.

John Ford had occasional opportunities to own both Spanish and French medals, but for some reason his pursuit of these treasures was tepid. The lack of solid representation from these countries constitutes the only hole in the

Ford Collection. Few specialists will notice the hole, so rich is the banquet in all other respects.

## The Montreal Medal—An Update

(by John W. Adams)

In 1760, during the final campaign to conquer Canada, General Amherst moved his army down the St. Lawrence River toward Montreal. He was accompanied by a force of 500 eastern Indians under Sir William Johnson. When Fort Levi was captured along the way, Amherst forbade looting, which was the normal compensation of the native American supporters. With no prospect of gain, most of the Indians abandoned the march and returned to their villages.

Some 182 Indians persevered and then participated in the reduction of Montreal. Johnson believed that this group was particularly deserving. He convinced Amherst to award them a medal as recognition of their loyalty. The obverse of the medal depicts the skyline of Montreal; the reverse has the name of the recipient engraved at the top from K eleven to K one and the name of his tribe punched in block letters across the center.

Johnson chose to award the medals in person and, given the dispersion of the various tribes, it seems likely that not all of the medals were distributed.

In The Indian Peace Medals of George III, we list eight specimens:

- 1) Tankalkel of the "MOHIGRANS." Now in the Public Archives of Canada.
- 2) Koskhakko of the "ONONDAGOS." Now in the Glenbow Museum.
- 3) Tekahonwagse of the "ONONDAGOS." Now in the Chateau de Ramezay.
- 4) No name reported, "MOHIGRANS." Western Collection.
- 5) Aruntes of the "MOHAWKS." Ex Murray Collection, May 10-14, 1926.



- 6) Madoghk of the "MOHIGRANS." Last recorded in the Glendining sale of June 15-19, 1925.
- 7) Songose of the "MOHIGRANS." Described in Beauchamp's *Metallic Ornaments of the New York Indians*.
- 8) Caneiya of the "ONONDAGOS." Described in Beauchamp.

Since the publication of this list in 1999, there have been two changes. The first one is simple: the ARUNTES medal has surfaced in the collections of Yale University. The provenance given is E. Alfred Jones, London to Francis P. Garvin of New York in 1931 and thence to Yale University. Presumably Jones bought the piece at Sotheby's Murray Sale in 1926. One explanation for the medal being in England is that it was brought there by Orante (i.e. Aruntes) when he, along with Joseph Brant, came to see King George III in 1776.

The second change is a surprise. Number four, listed by us as from a Western Collection, is now to be Lot 47 in Ford XVI and is described by the cataloguer as bearing the name SONGOSE, "partially effaced." To be more accurate, the upper portion of the medal has been mutilated with a combination of abrasives and chemicals in an apparent attempt to hide the provenance. In 1902, Robert McLachlan described the SONGOSE medal as "somewhat worn, but in good condition." Thus, the desecration of this proud historical artifact occurred between 1902 and 1961 when Mr. Ford made his purchase from Robert Brulé who, in turn, is listed as acquiring it from "C.A. Laframboise." It is not to Mr. Ford's credit that he failed to mention the subterfuge when providing information for our book: he stated orally and in writing that the medal was unnamed.

In any event, number four and number seven are now seen to be the same piece. This consolidation does not necessarily shrink our list because an unnamed medal was described by J.F. Fisher in the 1913 Collections of the

Massachusetts Historical Society. His cataloguing of early United States Medals is generally accurate so that his description of the reverse of a Montreal medal with the name of the tribe only ("MOHIGANS") must be given some weight. Somewhat hopefully, Fisher's medal becomes number four on our list and Ford's medal merges with number seven. Thus, the total remains at eight.

In his learned treatise on peace medals, Victor Morin states that twenty three Montreal medal were distributed. This number, which has been used by other writers as well, is inaccurate in our opinion. Of the three tribes represented in the modern census, Johnson lists the following numbers as being present at Montreal:

Mohawks	40
Mohickans	16
Onondagas	21

Presumably, he awarded most if not all of the medals due these Indians, i.e. 77 in total. In addition he must have issued the medals for the Canajoharees, who were his strongest allies and who lived close by Johnson Hall. Adding the 41 medals due the Canajoharees makes a grand total of 118 medals that were handed out even if Johnson did not consummate ceremonies with the several other tribes involved, which he no doubt accomplished at least in part.

If, as we believe, Sir Wilhelm awarded 150 medals, plus or minus, why is it that only eight are known to have survived? With the Happy While United medals issued several years later, twice as many have survived out of an original population that was somewhat smaller. The difference, in all probability, is that the Happy While United's are chief's medals of larger size. In other cases, the smaller, warrior-sized medals—e.g. the George and Charlotte, the small undated and the small 1814—come down to us in very limited numbers. Thus, there may well be a few Montreal medals waiting to be discovered but the limited corpus of survivors is consistent with the fate of somewhat comparable peers.

In any event, as a named memorial to an important event in our colonial history, the medal is a great desideratum. A large trove of official papers of the Johnson family surfaced in Montreal several years ago. Perhaps this attic yet contains some unawarded medals. Hopefully, the collectible supply will be augmented from this or some other unpredictable source.

### **First American Indian Peace Medal**

(by John W. Adams)

Below are the images, courtesy of the ANS, of the medal which was the subject of our piece in the August issue.



### **Indian Peace Medals - Fakes, Fantasies, & Fabrications** (by Tony Lopez)

[This most useful guidance for collectors is posted on the Internet. I commend it to the particular attention of our members—ed.]

There are so many fake, fantasy, and misrepresented Indian Peace Medals out there, I want to just give an important list of things to look for so you can avoid them and save your hard earned money.

First of all, If you find this guide useful, please **\*\*\*VOTE\*\*\*** below. The more votes the guide receives, the higher it will appear on the guide list, and more people will be protected by this important information.

**1) BEWARE of Indian Peace Medals which come with elaborate leather or silk sashes, collars, or trade beads as they are not likely to be genuine.**

I mention this first as these seem to be the most frequent types of fake Indian Peace Medals on eBay, and unfortunately they are at times selling for huge sums of money. Several of these fakes sold for thousands of dollars within the last months on eBay. There are even a couple of live auctioneers on eBay who are frequently selling these fakes, especially in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The original Indian Peace Medals were simply never awarded or worn in this fashion. In all of the important collections of Indian Peace medals that have come up for auction in the last 30 years, not a single Indian Peace Medal in any of those extensive and important collections as ever had an elaborate silk or leather sash, collar or trade beads attached.

This includes the John W. Garrett/John Hopkins University Collection, David W. Dreyfuss Collection, Chris Schenkel Collection, Springfield Collection, Lucien M. LaRiviere Collection, and the extremely extensive and important collection of Indian



Peace Medals from the John J. Ford Collection which are currently being auctioned by Stack's Rare Coin Auctions in New York City. These auction sales represent dozens and dozens of fully authenticated Indian Peace medals selling at the most reputable Auction Houses in the country, some selling for over \$100,000.00! Millions of dollars worth of Indian Peace Medals, purchased by the most knowledgeable and advanced collectors in the world, and not a single trade bead or elaborate sash is attached to any of these Medals.

Add to this list the ongoing regular auctions at the most reputable specialty auction houses that have an expertise in Indian Peace Medals, such as Presidential Coin and Antique, and Early American History auctions, and again, never once will you ever see a single trade bead or sash on any of the Indian Peace medals they offer.

Hopefully you get the point. Actually you can go back nearly 100 years to all of the important sales of Indian Peace Medals in the last century, and again, still no trade beads or sashes.

In the last 9 years I have seen thousands and thousands of Indian Peace Medals for sale on eBay with trade beads and sashes. **Every single one of them was a fake.** I was once asked the ratio of fake and fantasy Peace Medals to real ones. At the time I estimated the ratio was perhaps as high as 500:1. With the huge number of fakes I see pouring into the market, especially on eBay, I believe this is now closer to 5,000 or 10,000 to 1.

The elaborate silk sashes that you are commonly seeing on fake Indian Peace Medal presentations are in fact nothing more than sashes from Fraternal Lodges such as the Freemasons or the International Organization of Oddfellows, which were, of course, White organizations.

Here is a 19th century cabinet photo of a White Lodge member wearing one of the elaborate sashes you will see with fake Indian Peace Medals:



**19th Century Photo of Caucasian Male with Elaborate Lodge Sash**

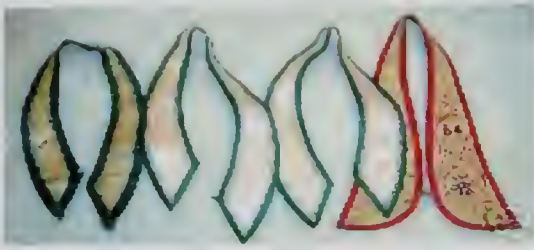
For many years these sashes were attached to cast fakes, or falsely aged restrikes, and unscrupulously sold to unknowledgeable Indian collectors.

It is laughable to see the **OOO** "Three interlocking oval O's" logo of the (at the time) all-white International **Order Of Oddfellows** clearly displayed on a sash, with an Indian Peace Medal attached at the bottom. These items absolutely do not belong together, and it is an inexcusable and disrespectful aberration of history for these sellers to fabricate and place such completely mismatched items together.

Unfortunately, from the large number of these coming on the market, It is obvious these are currently being produced, and in large numbers.

Actually, if you think about it, before 1890, Indians were not likely to wear the White man's lodge sashes, and even more unlikely, do you think the White Lodges would tolerate the Indians wearing their sashes? The sashes are late 19th to mid 20th century, you can easily buy them under the "Fraternal Lodges" category on Bay, and they are not rare.

See, I have a bunch of them:



**2) Presidential Indian Peace medals have been restruck by the US Mint for collectors for over 100 years, and you can buy them from the US Mint today on their website.**

In the 3 inch size they cost \$38.00, and in the 1 5/6 inch size they sell for \$3.50. (A small collector's size which is actually smaller than any of the original Peace Medals which were **never struck in any size smaller than 2 inches** in diameter).

Restrikes have various finishes, but in general, 19th century restrikes are a rich dark chocolate or mahogany finish, and 20th century restrikes have a more brassy or golden finish. 20th century strikes, and those being struck today at the US Mint in the 3 inch size have a finely sandblasted matte finish which does not reflect light.

19th century restrikes are rare and very collectible. To collectors, the 19th century copper bronzed strikes are referred to as "original" since they were usually struck with original dies, but technically they were not struck for use with the Indians, but for contemporary collectors. More than anything else, the beautiful richness of their color, and the sharpness of their designs make them far superior in quality to the modern 20th century golden bronze restrikes. The 19th century medals were struck in very small numbers as well, generally less than 200 strikes, so they are quite rare and command decent prices when they are offered for auction.

In the picture seen below there are two identical designs Washington Peace and Friendship Indian Peace Medals. The medal on the left is a 20th century strike, on the right a 19th century striking. The left 20th Century

medal is worth \$25-\$30.00, and the 19th century medal on the right I sold for \$750.00.



**20th Century**

**19th Century**

All of the Presidential Peace medals are currently available for purchase from the US Mint except the Lincoln, Grant, and the Oval peace medals with Garfield, Arthur, Hayes, Harrison, and Cleveland. These 7 specific medals were restruck by the US Mint until the early 1970's, and have not been offered or struck by the Mint in roughly 30 years. Despite the fact that they were struck until the mid-late 20th century, they were struck mostly on an "as ordered" basis, and never in large numbers, so they are actually somewhat uncommon today. The Lincoln medal in particular seems to be very difficult to acquire, and when one comes available on eBay, they sell for around \$100.00, or more.

**3) Genuine Engraved Washington Indian Peace medals are exceedingly rare and valuable, and to my knowledge have never been offered on eBay (and I have done a Peace Medal search on eBay every single day since April of 1997 when they were known as AuctionWeb!).**

I think it is safe to say that these rare medals have been pretty much accounted for, and all of the genuine ones have a long documented history. I heard a story where one of the great experts was asked to authenticate a Washington Engraved Medal. He told the collector "If you had one of the originals, I would already know you. I don't know you, so yours cannot be original!"



One of the easiest ways to condemn one of these medals as being a reproduction is by the size. The originals were huge. The smallest of the original medals measured 89.5mm X 124mm (that's 3 1/2 inches X 4 7/8 inches), and again, it was the smallest size. All of those I've seen offered on eBay are much smaller than this.

#### 4) How do you know if someone hasn't simply taken a modern one from the US mint and either falsely aged it, or silverplated it?

There are a great deal of fakes out there which are actually **silver-plated modern restrikes**. These are very deceptive.

Here's how to spot a modern restrike. There is a very distinct die characteristic for "Peace and Friendship" restrikes made after 1940. The upper serifs on the letters E and F on the reverse lettering have shortened or blunt serifs. This is caused by worn dies, or new dies cut from old worn dies, exhibiting the wear. Think of them as copies of copies, where the quality is simply lower over time. On medals struck in the 19th century, and early 20th century, those upper serifs are distinct and sharp, as is the lettering itself. Compare the lettering in these pictures:



19th Century Strike



#### 20th Century Struck circa 1970

The medal on the left is 19th century, the one on the right is circa 1970. The differences are fairly obvious.

Here is an example of a falsely aged US Mint modern restrike. It is hard to tell from the size of the scan, but the medal has the indistinct lettering and blunt serifs of the medals being produced at the US Mint today. Someone has drilled a big hole in it, scratched it up, and dragged it through dirt, trying to make it look old.



Falsely Aged Restrike

Last but not least, if the medal is smaller than 2 inches in diameter, it is definitely not original!

#### 5) Some Important Info on Jefferson Medals:

This blunt serif test does not apply to modern Jefferson medal reverses, where the modern strikes seem to have the same distinct serifs as the originals. I am studying this, and will add the information here once I find a definitive way to identify Jefferson medals as 19th or 20th century from the dies. Again, though, the restrikes made since at least the 1950's have the sandblasted matte finish, so you can still tell from closely looking at the surface of the medal. Also, the reverse die for the Jefferson 3" medal eventually broke, so



most original 3 inch Jefferson Medals exhibit a large die break on the reverse.

One more thing, the original 4 inch and 3 inch Jefferson silver Indian Peace Medals were hollow shells, but they were struck shells, so they should show the sharpness of struck medals. I have seen 4-inch Jefferson Medals which are very deceptive, but under close inspection are obviously fake cast copies, so be careful.. Real 4 inch medals are worth over \$100,000.00! It is very doubtful that an original will show up on eBay, and sell for only a few thousand dollars. The oldest rule, if it seems too good to be true, then it is!

#### **6) The US Mint has never drilled holes in Copper or Bronze Indian Peace medals.**

The only Indian Peace medals that had holes drilled in them were the original **silver** medals that were struck for presentation to the Indians. As you can see in the falsely aged medal above, there is a hole drilled in the medal. This was done outside of the US Mint.

If you see a hole drilled in any Presidential Indian Peace Medal which is not silver, you can be certain the medal is not original, or is a restrike that has been tampered with. One more thing, the holes drilled by the US mint on the original Silver Indian Peace medals were very small, presumably so as not to interfere with the designs on the medal. The falsely aged medal above has been carelessly drilled with a bit much larger than that used at the US Mint on the originals.

#### **7) With very few exceptions, genuine original medals are struck, and not cast. Cast medals are very likely to be fake.**

Signs of a fake cast medal are a pitted or blotchy surface, blurry lettering (note how sharply the letters rise from the surface in the above pictures, both of which are struck), and usually a pewter or German silver composition (made of base metals, and no real silver).

Here is a scan of a higher quality cast copy of a Harrison oval Indian Peace Medal.

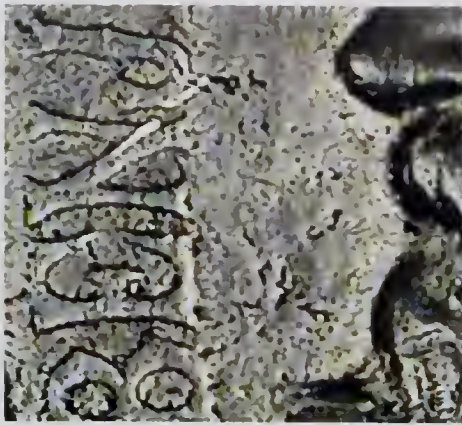
This is an old copy, which at first looks authentic and detailed, but under closer inspection you will see that it is a fake and of little or no value:



**Cast Copy**

This was cast in a base metal, and is a gray dull color which does not reflect light. Below there are two close-ups of this medal where you can clearly see the lack of detail in the design and in the lettering. The surface is pitted from air bubbles which were trapped in the mold during the casting process.

On the left is a close-up of the obverse between the mouth of Harrison and the lettering surrounding his bust. On the right is a close-up of the reverse area around the Indians torso and arm. Under magnification you can clearly see the pitted surface and poor details.



**Obverse Close-up**



**Reverse Close up**

### **8) Indian Peace Medals were NEVER struck in pewter.**

If the description states that the medal is pewter, it is definitely fake, and is 99% likely to be a **cast fake** as described above.

### **9) Beware of Cast Fantasy Items**

Different from fake copies and reproductions, fantasy items are not copies of original pieces, but rather fabricated imaginary items which were never originally produced during the actual era or events in which they appear to have come from. Most of these were made very recently, perhaps as recently as yesterday afternoon in the seller's garage!

There are a whole bunch of fantasy items out there which are cast fantasy items, and not original Indian Peace Medals, cast pieces which have raised relief designs on the front, and what appear to be engravings on the reverse.

Some of these fantasy pieces actually have an Indian on the obverse, which was never done originally. If the medal says way too much about the details of a specific treaty, or has writing in a Native language, it is almost definitely a fantasy item.

### **10) So What is it Worth Anyhow?**

To serious and knowledgeable collectors of these medals, these fakes and reproductions have little or no value. The fake cast Harrison medal above could be 100 years old, and is still a worthless fake, nothing more. Any medal, even official US Mint restrikes, which is faked, or has been tampered with permanently in order to appear to be something which it is not, or any fantasy item which has been produced for the purpose of appearing to be authentic, becomes basically reduced to what it is in reality, a fake. They were created as fakes and intended to mislead, and if you think about it, these pieces are really nothing more than a fraud.

None of these items has any actual rarity, historic, or intrinsic value. They are created primarily to prey on new collectors, and no knowledgeable or serious collector would spend a dime on any of these pieces. None of the legitimate Auction Houses will handle any of these fakes either.

### **11) Do Not Bid on Private Auctions!**

Private auctions are very often used because they hide your bid and your user name. In doing so, they prevent knowledgeable eBay users from e-mailing you to warn you that you are bidding on a fake. Sellers of fakes know this, so **Private Auctions should create a huge Red Flag** and any item listed this way needs to be avoided.

More than anything else, I suggest you **do your research first** and learn about these historic medals before spending your money.

Unfortunately, there has never been a definitive guide specifically for collectors of Indian Peace medals. Most of the reference



works I simply cannot recommend as being accurate or useful from a collectors standpoint.

One last very important piece of advice. Before you even consider collecting Indian Peace medals, I definitely recommend obtaining a copy of Robert W. Julian's *Medals of the United States Mint 1792-1892*, and a copy of the auction catalog for the *David Dreyfuss Collection* sold by Bowers and Merena and Presidential Coin and Antique in 1986, which had a huge group of Indian Peace Medals which were extensively described by Joseph Levine.

[http://reviews.ebay.com/Indian-Peace-Medals\\_W0QQugidZ10000000001438660](http://reviews.ebay.com/Indian-Peace-Medals_W0QQugidZ10000000001438660)

### **New York Numismatic Club Alexander Presidential Medal Available** (by David T. Alexander)

The New York Numismatic Club (NYNC) has released the 43<sup>rd</sup> in its Presidential Medal series, portraying its 2005-2006 President, David T. Alexander. Created by acclaimed sculptor Eugene L. Daub of California, the 38mm medals have been struck in .999 Silver and Brass by the Medalcraft Mint Inc., Green Bay, Wisconsin.

The new medal presents a bust facing left with legend DAVID T. ALEXANDER 2005-06, with inscription 43rd PRESIDENT NYNC at the left. The reverse presents the Club emblem, designed by Jonathan M. Swanson in 1918, symbolizing numismatics illuminating history with an ancient torch-bearer holding a coin before a pyramid, Column of Hadrian and peristyle temple within the legend NEW YORK NUMISMATIC CLUB, ORGANIZED 1908.

Alexander is a long-time member of NYNC, life member of the American Numismatic Association (ANA) and recipient of its Glenn B. Smedley Award and Medal of Merit. A life member of the Society for International Numismatics (SIN), he received

its Silver Medal of Merit for Excellence in Research and Writing.

He is a life member and past executive director of the Numismatic Literary Guild (NLG) and recipient of its Clemy Award; a 25-year member of the American Numismatic Society (ANS). He was elected to the David Rittenhouse Society and the Augustus B. Sage Society. He served for 11 years as Director of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Miami.

He served as International Editor of *Coin World*, Sidney, Ohio, and contributes a column, "The Research Desk." He is Contributing Editor of *COINage Magazine*, Ventura, California and is a contributor to the ANA's journal *Numismatist*. He founded Medal Collectors of America (MCA) in 1998. A professional numismatist, Alexander is lead cataloguer for the prominent auction firm of Stack's and Coin Galleries in New York City.

The Alexander medal is the latest in a series launched in 1910, when sculptor Victor D. Brenner of Lincoln Cent fame created the medal of Founding President Frank C. Higgins. The series includes such outstanding numismatists, researchers and collectors as Augustus G. Heaton, F.C.C. Boyd, Albert R. Frey, J. Sanford Saltus, Howland Wood, Edward T. Newell, Harold S. Bareford and Henry Grunthal.

A limited number of Alexander Presidential Medals are offered to collectors at \$95.00 plus \$5 for the serially numbered Silver and Brass; \$40.00 for Brass alone plus \$5 shipping and handling; for four or more \$10.00 for shipping and handling. Orders for the Alexander Medal should be addressed to the New York Numismatic Club Secretary-Treasurer Jerome C. Haggerty, 408 Atlantic Ave. Brooklyn NY 11217.





## Presidential Coin and Antique Co. Sale Of The Benj Fauver Collections

(by Joe Levine)

Reviewing the results of one's own auction is an assignment fraught with conflict - one impulse is to say that everything brought record prices and that the market has never been better. A countervailing impulse is to downplay the results so that one appears to be appropriately modest and not overly egotistical. I will try to steer a middle course here and will comment on the prices and the trends as I see

them in the collectors' market for medals. Comments about the overall quality of the catalog itself and the descriptions therein will be left to others who can cast a more unbiased eye than can the author of the catalog.

The discussion will be divided into four parts;

Political and Historical Medals;  
World's Fair Medals;  
U.S. Mint Medals,  
and Art Medals

### Political and Historical Medals

The offering here was a relatively modest one. It featured a Fine/ Very Fine example of a George I Indian Peace Medal which was purchased in our 1993 sale for \$2420.00. This time around, it brought almost double - \$4,542.00 including the 15% buyer's premium. (All prices quoted in this review will include the 15% premium.) Heading the Washingtonia was a heretofore unreported copper electrotpe variety of C. C. Wright's Declaration of Independence Medal. The obverse of this medal did not have the usual GEORGE WASHINGTON inscription in vertical lines to either side of the bust. It brought \$747.50. Laura Gardin Fraser's large Washington Bicentennial Medal in Silver (used as an essay award by the Bicentennial Commission) realized a record \$1035.00.

The relatively common Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Plaque of 1920 by Mrs. Fraser's husband, James Earle Fraser brought a strong \$874.00. This popular plaque, almost always found in bronzed iron, appears regularly on eBay with about as many stories attached to it as I have fingers and toes. It seems that the more "toney" the seller, the more extravagant the claims and the price estimates. As I write this, there is currently on eBay one of these very plaques being offered by the Pennsylvania Auction House of Pook & Pook. The starting bid is \$1500.00 with an estimate of \$3,000 - \$5,000. The statement is made that the plaque was one of only 25 examples cast. Under the

circumstances, I could not have thought of a better name for the seller than what they have.

Another relatively common medal - Saint Gaudens' large commemorative for the 1889 Centennial of Washington's Inauguration as President also did well at \$536.00. This is another of those medals that is plentiful enough in the auction marketplace that its price fluctuates considerably. It seems to do better when its auction description is heavy on Saint Gaudens and less on George Washington.

Because I have long specialized in Official Inaugural Medals, I have probably handled more of Saint Gaudens' medal for Theodore Roosevelt's 1905 Inauguration than everybody else combined. At last count I have sold 15 of them. For many years, they consistently sold in the \$4500-5500 price range. Then in 1998 they started a climb which has yet to abate. I have offered one in each of my last three sales. Each time I go into the sale wondering if I will be able to even come close to the price at which the last one sold and each time I get pleasantly surprised. This time a nice AU example tipped the scales at a record \$31,625.00.

## **WORLD'S FAIR MEDALS**

Our offering of fair and exposition medals contained several very rare pieces and a host of relatively common official award medals. The Columbian Expo official medal by Saint Gaudens in its aluminum box brought a healthy \$345.00 while Eglit #336, the Designer's Medal awarded to famed sculptor Frederick MacMonnies brought \$1495.00. I was quite pleased with this latter price, but then I heard that the purchaser, Paul Bosco (no slouch at valuing medals himself) is now offering it for sale at double what he paid for it.

Hermon MacNeil's named bronze award medal for the Pan American Exposition brought \$805.00 and the South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Expo award medal fetched \$414.00. The Saint Louis World's Fair was represented by 5 different medals. A. A.

Weinmann's Grand Prize medal brought \$379.00 as did his triangular official commemorative medal. A pair of Comite Francais medals brought \$448.00 and \$431.00 respectively, while the gold award medal from the Philippine Exhibit hit a record \$805.00. The exceedingly rare German Imperial Plaque by Peter Breuer was hammered down for a respectable 2587.50.

An awarded example of Tiffany's Jamestown Expo medal fetched \$373.00 and a cased example of the relatively common Pan Pac Award medal by Flanagan was sold for \$379.00. Finally, a named example of the California Pacific International Exposition award medal found a buyer at \$690.00.

## **UNITED STATE MINT MEDALS**

A small offering of Annual Assay medals was highlighted by a rare 1898 medal struck in copper (as opposed to the more usual silver) which realized \$833.00. There were a total of 13 lots of War of 1812 Military medals which brought a wide variety of prices ranging from a low of \$126.00 to a high of \$920.00. Since most of these pieces have approximately the same mintage, the lesson learned here is condition - condition - condition - with the higher prices going to those pieces struck from original dies and described as being in choice uncirculated condition. It used to be that the medals from the Military series were the poor sisters of those from the Naval series, but the former price differential has now narrowed considerably.

The Mexican War medals were also well received, especially the elusive Col. Bliss medal (MI-28) which brought \$1495.00. The large (90mm) Zachary Taylor Buena Vista medal with a few rim nicks realized a modest \$402.50 while the popular Taylor Pelican Medal (MI-25) did bring a solid \$833.00.

US Mint medal struck in gold are generally quite rare and in demand, but still, the \$1610.00 which the tiny 13.3 gram Maryland



Institute award medal brought was notable surprise to me.

## **ART MEDALS**

The strongest portion of the sale was that devoted to the art medals. My personal favorite was a 14" cast bronze Galvano of a young woman by John Flanagan. Before accepting it for auction, I tried to buy it from its owner, my friend Neil MacNeil. I offered him the generous sum of \$3,000 for it but was unceremoniously turned down. Since my wife liked the piece at least as much as I did, we placed a book bid on the piece at a slightly higher price, hoping that our advantage of not having to pay a buyer's fee and our 10% commission would give us an insurmountable advantage in the bidding. The piece sold for \$10,580.00!

Other Flanagan medals of note were clichés of his Pennsylvania Society Distinguished Achievement medal for \$333; a 135mm plaque of Morgan Gardner Bulkeley at \$718.00; and his ever popular 1937 Sculptor's Dinner plaque with a portrait of Saint Gaudens which brought \$632.00.

The power of a name was evident when a uniface 80mm cast bronze medal of Garfield's Attorney General, Wayne MacVeigh, was offered. Had it been executed by almost anyone else, it might have brought several hundred dollars. However, because it was the work of Augustus Saint Gaudens, it sold for \$3,565.00! So too for the medal for The Women's Auxiliary of the Massachusetts Civil Service Reform Association in extremely fine condition with numerous nicks and dents. This rare medal, a production of Frances Grimes and with assistance of Augustus Saint Gaudens, brought \$3887.00! Two other Saint Gaudens medals are worthy of note. The Tiffany marked Benjamin Franklin Bicentennial medal, a joint production of Augustus and Louis Saint Gaudens, realized a record \$5750.00 and the unique pattern of that medal with a laurel wreath on Franklin's head sold for a

surprisingly strong \$15,525.00 - the second highest price for a medal in the sale.

Other prominent sculptors were also represented in the sale. James Earle Fraser's Thomas Alva Edison Award medal for the American Institute of Electrical Engineers fetched an impressive \$1351.00 while his Pony Express medal for the Society of Medalists saw bidding reach a notable \$517.00. Laura Gardin Fraser's WWI Army and Navy Chaplain's medal brought \$322.00 while her Thomas Jefferson medal for the American Bar Association commanded \$920.00.

Daniel Chester French's 77mm version of the Catskill Aqueduct medal sold for \$2472.00 (a price usually reserved for silver examples) and his French and British War Commission medal for the ANS brought a much more modest (and even cheap!) \$110.00. Paul Manship was represented by his 1914 New York Tercentenary medal & book for the Circle of the Friends which brought \$287.00 and his WWI City of Detroit veterans medal realized \$437.00.

Finally, there was a small collection of the medals from the contemporary artist, Alex Shagin. These cast medals were relatively large size and in high relief and covered a variety of topics. Most were his commercial productions, but a few were medallic exercises and were unique, or nearly so. They brought prices ranging from \$80 to \$250.00.

## **Unknown NH Town Medal Surfaces**

(by Bob Fritsch)

During the 1960s and '70s, hundreds of cities, towns and villages across New England celebrated their anniversaries for 100, 150, 200, 250, 300 and even 350 years of existence. Most of these places issued medals as part of their commemoration. Principally struck by the Robbins Company of Attleboro, MA, or the V.H. Blackinton Company of Attleboro Falls, MA, these medals were characterized by



excellent design and high relief. It is this author's opinion that as a series, these medals are the best of all town medals across the United States.

The City of Laconia, NH is a typical example. It celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> year of incorporation in 1968 with a sterling silver numbered and a bronze unnumbered medal, cataloged by Heath as NH116-1. Mintage was 2000 of each metal, with issue price of the sterling at \$10 and the bronze at \$2.00. Amazingly, prices have changed little with current prices running about \$20 for the set. This 36mm medal features The Laconia Car on the obverse with the inscription LACONIA, N.H. DIAMOND JUBILEE / 1893-1968 around the edge and THE LACONIA CAR on a ribbon beneath the main design feature. The reverse features the city's seal.

Laconia, NH, is located in the state's Lakes region, on the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee, the state's largest lake. It was founded in 1855 as a town, incorporated as a city in 1893, and is the county seat of Belknap County. It was a manufacturing town with several mills established in the region, but its most famous product was a trolley / subway car dubbed "The Laconia Car" That company operated from 1858 into the 1930s. Other manufacturing continued until the 1960s when the mills generally shut down throughout the state. Today, tourism is Laconia's principle industry, with high tech and light manufacturing following.

Now we get to the focus of this article. The author fell in love with these medals at first sight and has collected them ever since, building the collection to one of the best in the state. Always on the lookout for new additions, he recently heard a collector complaining because a medal was too expensive, Upon learning the details, he asked the owner about it and was surprised to learn that it was a 14K gold medal from Laconia. Uttering the words "But there is no Laconia Gold," he was countered with "Wanna bet?" Arriving at a

mutually agreeable price, the deal was soon concluded and the medal exchanged owners. The medal is the same size as the other NH116-1s and has the edge inscription "14Kr" (the lower case "r" was Robbins' hallmark). It is looped so it could be sold as "jewelry" since open gold ownership by US citizens was then illegal. This is the only known example of this medal.

The New England Town Medals were cataloged by Robert Ray Heath with one catalog for each state in the region. Massachusetts was the most prolific state with four volumes in its catalog, followed by New Hampshire with two volumes, and one each for Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont and Maine. Bob passed on last December and his estate is assigning these catalogs to various collectors in New England.

If you like little bits of Americana, I highly commend the New England series as an inexpensive and highly pleasurable piece of the hobby.

#### References:

Heath, Robert R. *Commemorative Medals of New Hampshire Cities and Towns*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Waltham, MA: self-published, 2004  
<http://www.city.laconia.nh.us/Administration/general%20information/history.htm>

#### Letters to the Editor

John,

Got the August 2006 issue of MCA Advisory today and was very surprised by my article. Seems I sent you some of my research notes (e.g., the website) instead of the article itself. Mea culpa. But to correct the situation, here is a LOE apology to the members plus the real article.

TO THE MEMBERS OF MCA, AN APOLOGY. When I submitted my article on Laconia, I erroneously sent some of my research files instead of the actual article.

While the item published was fascinating, it was not my work as a quick glance at Laconia's website can tell

[<http://www.cityoflaconianh.org/Administration/general%20information/history.htm>]. My apologies to all for any confusion created.

//Bob Fritsch

And the real article is attached.

Bob

Mr. Adams,

Hi, I am looking for some help. I hope you can point me in the right direction. I have two medals; I think they are War Medals of some kind, although I am not quite sure. I will give you the background. My mother found them while we were living in Dunoon, Scotland. We were stationed there while my father was in the Navy. We had gone into a castle and my mother found these two medals. This was in 1982.

I have attached two pictures of each, one of each side of the medals. I know the resolution is not that great but it was taken with my regular camera.

Here is a description of each side of the medal:

First Medal: 1914-1918 has a man on a horse, horse is standing on a shield and there is a skull and cross bones beside the shield. Behind the horse is a sea, above it and to the right of its head is the sun. On the back is the head of a man, following writing verbatim "GEORGIVS V BRITT. OMN:REX ET IND:IMP:" The fabric on the medal is purple, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. On the side of the coin (the flat edge) there are some letters the only thing that makes any sense is the word GLASGLOW. The medal itself is fairly heavy. It is dark in color and has always been kept put up. It is in good shape.

Second Medal: 1914-1919 Gold in color. One side has an angelic figure of what appears to be a man with wings in a long dress like outfit. The front has no writing on it. The back says "THE GREAT WAR FOR CIVILISATION 1914-1919" and that's it. In a circular pattern around the quote mentioned above is a wreath or grain like decoration on it. On the flat edge of the coin there is some writing as well but GLASGLOW is all that I can make out.

Any help you can give would be appreciated.

Thanks so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Kristal Bennett





"Members with information should feel free to write Ms. Barnett directly or, if you prefer, send your comments to me. My thanks for your responses."

